

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 SAB-01 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01 /058 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT:TORRIJOS VISIT TO CUBA

1. THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS HAVE BEEN PREPARED FOR TODAY'S NOON BRIEFING BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, IN CASE THE SUBJECT OF THE TORRIJOS TRIP TO CUBA IS RAISED.

2. Q. IS GENERAL TORRIJOS, THE PANAMANIAN CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT, GOING TO VISIT CUBA? A. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS HAS ACCEPTED AN INVITATION TO VISIT CUBA JANUARY 10 - 15.

3. Q. WHEN DID WE LEARN OF THIS TRIP? A. THE VISIT WAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANNOUNCED LAST SEPTEMBER, ALTHOUGH THE DATES FOR IT WERE

NOT ANNOUNCED UNTIL THE LATE FALL.

4. Q. WHAT EFFECT WILL THE TORRIJOS VISIT TO CUBA HAVE ON THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS? A. WE ANTICIPATE NO DIRECT EFFECT ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. BUT WE WOULD HAVE TO EXPECT THAT THE TRIP WILL STIMULATE SOME PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF THEM. THE PROBLEM OF ARRIVING AT A SATISFACTORY AGREEMENT TO REPLACE THE 1903 TREATY WILL EXIST AFTER THE TRIP JUST AS IT DID BEFORE. OUR OBJECTIVE IS TO MAKE AN ARRANGEMENT WHICH WILL PROTECT OUR LONG-TERM INTEREST--TO KEEP THE CANAL SAFE, OPEN, EFFICIENT AND NEUTRAL. WE ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO CONCLUDE SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT. WE TRUST IT WILL BE JUDGED ON ITS MERITS BY THE CONGRESS AND THE PUBLIC.

5. Q. WHY IS TORRIJOS GOING TO CUBA? A. THAT QUESTION IS BEST ANSWERED BY PANAMA. BUT, WE UNDERSTAND THAT GENERAL TORRIJOS WILL BE INVITING HIS HOSTS TO ATTEND THE 150TH ANNIVERSARY NEXT JUNE OF THE 1826 BOLIVARIAN CONFERENCE IN PANAMA. (FOOTNOTE NUMBER 1) GENERAL TORRIJOS HAS VISITED A NUMBER OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES (FOOTNOTE NUMBER 2) IN RECENT MONTHS AND HAS EXTENDED THIS INVITATION TO OTHER HEADS OF STATE. (FOOTNOTE NUMBER 3)

6. Q. HAS THE UNITED STATES DONE ANYTHING TO DISCOURAGE THIS TRIP? A. THE DECISION CONCERNING THE VISIT BY A CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TO ANOTHER COUNTRY IS, OF COURSE, THE PROVINCE OF THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. I BELIEVE THAT THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT IS QUITE AWARE THAT SOME SECTORS OF PUBLIC OPINION WITHIN THIS COUNTRY WOULD PROBABLY NOT WELCOME SUCH A VISIT. THE FACT IS, THOUGH, THAT A NUMBER OF OTHER HEADS OF STATE IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE HAVE EITHER ALREADY VISITED OR ARE SCHEDULED TO VISIT HAVANA. (FOOTNOTE NUMBER 4)

7. FYI - FOOTNOTE NUMBER 1 - THAT CONFERENCE--WHICH WAS CALLED THE CONGRESS OF PANAMA--WAS CONVENED BY SIMON BOLIVAR AS AN EFFORT AT CONCILIATION AND INTER-AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE NEULY INDEPENDENT NATIONS OF THE AMERICAS...AND IS WIDELY REGARDED AS THE PRECURSOR OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MODERN SYSTEMS OF PAN AMERICAN COOPERATION. (THE UPCOMING CONFERENCE IS ALSO REFERRED TO BY ITS GREEK NAME--THE AMPHYCTIONIC CONFERENCE.) PRONOUNCE: AM-FICT-EE-ONIC: AN ASSOCIATION OF NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES.

8. FOOTNOTE NUMBER 2 - VENEZUELA, COLUMBIA, BOLIVIA, PERU, COSTA RICA AND GUATAMALA.

9. FOOTNOTE NUMBER 3 - THOSE LISTED IN FOOTNOTE 2 PLUS BRAZIL, CHILE, MEXICO, URAGUAY, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR AND JAMAICA. INVITATIONS HAVE ALSO GONE TO GUAYANA, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, HAITI, ECUADOR, NICARAGUA AND BARBADOS. THE STATUS OF POSSIBLE EUROPEAN OBSERVERS (WEST GERMANY AND SPAIN) IS NOT YET CLEAR.

10. FOOTNOTE NUMBER 4 - PRESIDENT LUIS ECHEVERRIA OF MEXICO; PRIME MINISTERS MICHAEL MANLEY OF JAMAICA, FORBES BURNHAM OF GUYANA, AND ERIC WILLIAMS OF TRINIDAD-TOBAGO

HAVE VISITED HAVANA, AND A VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER PIERRE TRUDEAU OF CANADA HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED FOR LATER THIS MONTH. KISSINGER

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